

**Top Ten List  
Of  
Little Known Rhode Island  
Motor Vehicle Laws**

If you've ever watched a court TV show, you've probably heard the judge say, "Ignorance of the law is not an excuse." In Rhode Island, as it probably is in many other states, there are some laws that most people are not aware of. The following is a list of ten of the least-known (or least obeyed) Rhode Island motor vehicle laws.

1. **Don't drive your car with any significant amount of snow or ice on it.** "Significant" is construed as any amount of accumulation which might reasonably be expected to blow off the vehicle and obscure the vision of another operator.
2. **It is against RI law to drive a vehicle or a bicycle while wearing earphones or a headset.** This refers to music, not to cellular phones.
3. **Turn on your interior light if you are stopped by police.** RI law requires you to turn on your dome light when stopped between one half-hour after sunset and one half-hour before sunrise. This is for the safety of the police officer.
4. **If the weather is such that you need your wipers, you also need your headlights.** Turn them on when your wipers are in use due to rain, sleet, snow, hail or other unfavorable atmospheric condition, or at any other time when there is not sufficient light or visibility.
5. **Don't enter an intersection until you can clear it.** If traffic is such that when you enter an intersection you cannot pass through that intersection, then don't! Wait until there is enough clearance for your vehicle to completely pass through the intersection before going.
6. **Inspect a vehicle purchased out of state.** If you purchase a used vehicle out of state, it must be inspected by a RI inspection station within five days of registering the vehicle. Newly purchased vehicles must be inspected within two years from date of purchase or before the vehicle accumulates 24,000 miles, whichever occurs first.
7. **Notify the registry of your change of address.** Whenever you change your address, you must notify the registry, in writing, within 10 days of the move.
8. **Your registration plates must be visible.** Your plates must be visible from a distance from 100 feet during daylight. Plastic plate covers, whether colored or not, make this impossible. Also, your plate is required to be displayed in a certain location; displaying it in a back window or front windshield is not allowed. At night, the rear plate must be illuminated.

**9. Restrain your pet.** If your pet is being transported in an open air vehicle (ie: pickup truck), it must be restrained with a harness manufactured for the purpose of restraining animals by means other than neck restraints.

**10. Aftermarket window tint is strictly prohibited.** Any tint that is applied to a vehicle window must be in compliance with specific reflectivity standards. Any tint that is in the form of a sticker and applied to a window is prohibited.

If you have any questions, you can call your local police or any State Police barracks.